

BOOK REVIEWS

Plants of the Bible

Bible Plants for American Gardens. By Eleanor A. King. The Macmillan Co. 1941. Pp. 203. \$2.00.

Probably everyone is familiar with some of the many Biblical references to plants, from the first chapter of Genesis, where on the third day of creation "the earth brought forth grass, and herbs yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit" down to New Testament times when Jesus looking out over the mountain side said: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow . . . even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Probably the majority of people reading of the lilies picture to themselves Easter lilies, so it may come as a surprise to read that the lilies referred to were anemones.

There have been numerous magazine articles on flowers and trees of the Bible. The Journal of the New York Botanical Garden in March, 1941, had an illustrated article on "Plants of the Holy Scripture" by Miss King, and also a check list prepared in connection with the Garden's exhibit at the International Flower Show by Dr. Moldenke of all plants mentioned in the Bible with the scientific names of the plants as they are understood by modern students. But no complete work of a popular nature on the subject has appeared until this book by Miss King. In the front there is a paragraph of appreciation of the help given by the staff of the New York Botanical Garden, especially of that of Harold N. Moldenke. Comparing the book with the scholarly study—Plants of the Bible—distributed in mimeographed form by Dr. Moldenke, it is evident that this work was drawn on to a large extent in the writing of the present volume.

As the title suggests the book is a gardeners' manual with directions for growing the plants, outdoors or in, especially for those interested in plantings or gardens for church grounds. But it is much more, as it identifies the plants mentioned in the Bible, tells something of their characters, uses and meanings to ancient peoples. Merely identifying the species is often difficult, not only because the names used by the English translators were given by men unacquainted with the plants of Palestine, but also because the writers of the Scriptures were not thinking in terms of botany, but used vernacular Hebrew or Greek names that often referred to more than

one kind of flower. For example, the rose was some flower with a bulbous root—tulip, narcissus, crocus of amaryllis—probably a general term including all of these; the lily of the field, as already mentioned, was an anemone (*Anemone coronaria*), but possibly included all the wild flowers blooming on the hillsides; apples were apricots, quinces or oranges; the gourd that shaded Jonah may have been a vine of the gourd family, though many students believe it to have been the castor bean. Of course, for many of the plants named there is no doubt as to the species—the Cedar of Lebanon, olive, fig, green bay, palm, and some of the spices and plants used for perfumes or in making incense.

The book will be of great value to those who desire to devote a part of their gardens to these plants of such sacred memories, to all students of the Bible and to plant lovers generally. The dozen full page plates illustrate a few of the plants and give some suggestions for flower arrangements that combine beauty with religious significance.

GEORGE T. HASTINGS

An Individual Botany Text

Work Book in General Botany. By H. C. Sampson. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1941. 242 looseleaf pages. \$1.75.

The subtitle of this publication is "A problem approach to plant science through observation and discussion." This, perhaps as well as any single phrase, can be used to describe the method of instruction in the beginning course at Ohio State University under the immediate supervision of Professor Sampson. It is inevitable that many teachers of elementary botany may look with some disfavor on this guide for it can scarcely be said to follow traditional lines. It is therefore necessary that a little of its background be reviewed.

There has been much discussion concerning the method of instruction followed in that institution. In the first place, the beginning student is not assigned a chapter in a book and told to return the next day and "recite his lesson." Also, there is no differentiation between lecture and laboratory sessions, for the students meet in the same room with their instructor one hour a day, five days a week. This provides the necessary continuity of topic and concept so sadly lacking in many courses; it also establishes firm contact between